In botanical arrangements, the Coptis will follow the Hellebores, from which it was taken, remaining in the class and order *Polyandria*, *Polygynia*, with the Multisiliquæ of Linnæus and the Ranunculaceæ of Jussieu.

The roots of this plant, from which the name of *goldthread* is taken, are perennial and creeping. On removing the moss and decayed leaves from the surface of the ground, they discover themselves of a bright yellow colour, running in every direction. The bases of the new stems are invested with a number of yellowish, ovate, acuminate stipules. Leaves ternate, on long slender petioles; leafets roundish, acute at base, lobed and crenate, the crenatures acuminate; smooth, firm, veiny. Scape slender, round, bearing one small, starry white flower, and a minute, ovate, acute bracte at some distance below. Calyx none. Petals five, six or seven, oblong, concave, white. Nectaries five or six, inversely conical, hollow, yellow at the mouth. Stamens numerous, white, with capillary filaments and roundish anthers. Germs from five to seven, stipitate, oblong, compressed; styles recurved. Capsules pedicelled, umbelled, oblong, compressed, beaked, with numerous black oval seeds attached to the inner side.

The root of this plant is a pure intense bitter,

scarcely modified by any other taste. In distillation it communicates no decided sensible quality to water. The constituent with which it most abounds is a bitter extractive matter, soluble both in water and alcohol. It seems destitute of resinous or gummy portions, since the residuum from an evaporated solution in alcohol is readily dissolved in water, and vice versa. It is devoid of astringency when chewed in the mouth, and it gives no indication of the presence of tannin or gallic acid when tested with animal gelatin, or with sulphate of iron. The abundance of the bitter principle is evinced by the acetate of lead and nitrate of silver, both of which throw down a copious precipitate. The sulphuric, nitric, and muriatic acids occasion no change, and the muriate of tin gives only a slight precipitate, after some time standing.

Of this article larger quantities are sold in the druggists' shops in Boston, than of almost any indigenous production. The demand for it arises from its supposed efficacy as a local application in aphthous, and other ulcerations of the mouth. Its reputation however in these cases is wholly unmerited, since it possesses no astringent or stimulating quality, by which it can act on the ulcerated spots, and where benefit has attended its use, it is doubtless to be ascribed to other articles